

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 EB-11 TRSE-00 AID-20

FEA-02 INT-08 OMB-01 DRC-01 /144 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3212

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 2757

RIO FOR SECRETARY SHULTZ

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VE FR ENRG

SUBJECT: FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA

REF: CARACAS 2559

1. FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT TOLD PRESS HE HAD EMPHASIZED IN HIS MEETING WITH VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER SCHACHT FRANCE'S DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN ITS RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA, SINCE "WE DO NOT HAVE OUR VISION FIXED ON REGIONAL EUROPEAN AFFAIRS." IN PRESS INTERVIEW BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FOR PARIS NIGHT OF MARCH 27 JOBERT WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT HE HAD TOLD PREISDENT PEREZ FRANCE IS INTERESTED IN HELPING VENEZUELA ECONOMICALLY AND TECHNICALLY TO EXPLOIT AND PROCESS THE PETROLEUM IN THE ORINOCO PETROLEUM BELT. "CLEARLY", JOBERT WAS QUOTED AS SAYING, "IF WE COULD BE MORE DIRECT PARTNERS IN THE EXPLOITATION, THE COOPERATION WOULD BE OF ANOTHER KIND, OF COURSE." HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH NATIONAL OIL COMPANY HAD BEEN HOLDING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE VENEZUELAN PETROLEUM COMPANY AND THAT THE FRENCH PETROLEUM INSTITUTE HAD ALSO BEEN IN CONTACT WITH UNSPECIFIED VENEZUELAN ENTITITES. HE ADDED THAT FRANCE

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HAS EXCELLENT TECHNIQUES FOR TRANSPORTING NATURAL GAS BY SHIP, AND

THAT VENEZUELA IS NOT GIVING SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO NATURAL GAS. JOBERT WAS QUOTED AS STATING THAT PRESIDENT PEREZ APPROVED OF THE PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS, BUT POINTED OUT THAT ANY DECISION ON THE MATTER WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE GOV'S PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORINOCO PETROLEUM BELT.

2. JOBERT ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT FRANCE HAS NO AMBITION TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP OF THE THIRD WORLD. HE SAID HE ATTACHED MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET AND THOSE OF THE ANDEAN PACT. JOBERT ALSO DEPRECATED HIS IMPORTANCE IN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS POSSIBLE TO SUCCESSION TO PRESIDENT POMPIDOU.

3. ASKED ABOUT JOBERT'S STATEMENTS CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORINOCO PETROLEUM BELT, MINISTER OF MINES AND HYDROCARBONS VALENTIN HERNANDEZ TOLD PRESS MARCH 28, "WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATING THE ORINOCO PETROLEUM BELT WITH ANYBODY. WE ARE INTERESTED IN COMMENCING EXPLORATION AND INVESTIGATING THE QUALITY OF THE PETROLEUM THERE. BUT ALL THIS INVESTIGATION AND LATER EXPLORATION WILL BE FOR VENEZUELA. FOR THE PRESENT WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN INCREASING OUR OIL PRODUCTION AND THEREFORE THE EXPLOITATION OF THE BELT IS NOT URGENT."

4. COMMENT: FRENCH EMBOFF TOLD POL COUNSELOR AT RECEPTION FOR JOBERT THAT LATTER HAD SELECTED CARACAS AS SITE FOR FRENCH CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING (WHICH ENDED MARCH 28) IN PREFERENCE TO MEXICO CITY BECAUSE OF VENEZUELA'S PETROLEUM. HE SAID FRANCE IS PLANNING A MAJOR TRADE EFFORT IN LATIN AMERICA IN GENERAL AND VENEZUELA IN PARTICULAR, AND THAT THE CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING WAS HELD TO PLAN AND ARTICULATE FRENCH STRATEGY IN THIS EFFORT. HE SAID HIS EMBASSY'S COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR WOULD SHORTLY RETURN TO FRANCE ON TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT TO ASSIST IN THE PLANNING. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT PETROLEUM WAS THE MAJOR PREOCCUPATION OF JOBERT AND THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS IN CARACAS.

5. WE ALSO HAVE CONFIRMATION OF THIS LAST STATEMENT FROM OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES, TOGETHER WITH EVIDENCE THAT THE MAIN REASON FOR JOBERT'S VISIT HERE IS FRANCE'S INTEREST IN OBTAINING ANOTHER STRING TO ITS BOW IN VENEZUELA IN THE MATTER OF OBTAINING POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF PETROLEUM SUPPLIES.

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